

DRAFT Summary Points
Western Oregon University Institutional Evaluation
December, 2016

ORS 352.061 requires the HECC to conduct annual evaluations of public universities in Oregon according to specific statutory criteria. Overall, the HECC's approach is to assess the university's contributions to statewide goals for higher education. We do not purport to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the university against its own mission. A summary of key findings follows:

1. **Accreditation:** WOU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), and is fully on track with the 7-year NWCCU cycle for accreditation. During its last review in 2016 for its Year Seven evaluation, NWCCU recommended that WOU focus on defining its mission fulfillment and accomplishment; and establish objectives and outcomes of each core theme and learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees.
2. **Economic impact:** In addition to being the second largest preparer of teachers in Oregon, the economic impact of construction projects at WOU over the past decade has been more than \$100 million.
3. **Student access and student success:** After a several years of enrollment increases driven by non-resident students, enrollment began to decline in 2011 and continued through Fall 2016 which saw an overall enrollment decline of 1.2% from the previous year. From 2015 to fall 2016, non-resident enrollment increased by 2.5% while resident enrollment declined by 2.2%. However, the number of underrepresented minority students enrolled at WOU continues to grow and now represents 23.3% of the university's total, the largest percentage at any Oregon public university. WOU also maintains an increasing trajectory in the number of degrees awarded. While six-year graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients are on par with the overall student rate, underrepresented minority students lag the institutional average by 2 percentage points. The number of degrees awarded to underrepresented minority students has been declining over the past three years
4. **Affordability:** For 2016-17, WOU's resident undergraduate tuition increased by 5.35%, and the estimated total cost of attendance increased by 4.28% to \$24,000. For WOU students who leave the university with debt, their average debt load is \$24,500.
5. **Academic Quality and Research:** In addition to maintaining in good standing with its regional accreditor, WOU is commended for its commitment for the access and success of first generation and low income students. For FY 2016, it reports total research expenditures of \$12.3 million.
6. **Collaboration:** WOU contributes to a host of collaborative activities with other post-secondary institutions, including a decade long dual enrollment partnership with Chemeketa Community College. In fall 2015 about 36.4% of WOU's undergraduates were transfer students, many of them from an Oregon community college.
7. **Shared administrative services:** WOU participates in all of the services offered by the University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE).

8. **Financial metrics:**

Western Oregon University Ratios				
Ratio	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	Benchmark
Viability Ratio	41.00%	50.00%	48.00%	>125%
Primary Reserve Ratio	29.00%	35.00%	25.00%	>40%
Net Operating Revenues Ratio	-3.88%	3.22%	-7.52%	>4%
Return on Net Assets Ratio	5.81%	31.83%	86.54%	>6%
Debt Burden Ratio	3.85%	4.87%	4.70%	<5%

Displayed benchmarks for public universities from NACUBO publications.

9. **Board of Trustees:** In 2016, the WOU Board of Trustees appears to have met its legal responsibilities for providing public notice, accessibility, and records. In 2016, the Board exercised many of the powers reserved for it under law, including presidential oversight, budget adoption, tuition adoption, debt issuance, and program approval (for HECC consideration).